

NO RETURNS ALLOWED

Cinematic screenplay by Carrie Talbot

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This cinematic scene screenplay is a fan work, created solely for the purposes of coursework and to demonstrate my writing ability in my portfolio. As the author of this fan work, I earn no compensation in any form from its creation or publication.

The scenario is 'No Returns Allowed', and revolves around a mixture of existing and invented game characters. An angry customer (A) wants a refund, the shopkeeper won't give one, and another customer (B) is waiting impatiently. The setting is a Zhentarim (underground smuggler-traders) 'shop' by the docks. The scene takes place shortly before the events of Baldur's Gate III.

Customer B is Gale Dekarios, a friendly, forward, and slightly pompous wizard suffering from a 'condition' that's taken hold in his chest, which he has to manage by regularly consuming magical artefacts containing traces of the Weave. (This condition provides tension in the scene but is addressed at a later point, in the main game).

The shopkeep is Olly, a nervous junior Zhentarim agent in BG3. Customer A is the Hooded Customer/Jaro, a character I invented.

INT. A ZHENTARIM TRADER 'SHOP' - DAY

We OPEN on a dusty warehouse doubling as a trader 'shop'. It's stacked with crates, some bearing the hastily-hidden mark of the Zhentarim - a network of merchant-mercenaries. GALE (35), a renowned wizard who appears stressed and in some pain, trying not to clutch his breastbone too obviously, enters reluctantly.

OLLY (early 20s), a junior Zhentarim agent, is trying to pacify a HOODED CUSTOMER at the 'counter' of crates.

OLLY

Just a minute-

HOODED CUSTOMER

We're not done, Zhent. My coin and a fix for this. Now.

OLLY

(Looking nervously over his shoulder)
Like I said, I can't. No refunds, ok?
Zarys - Hells, Rugan, even - would string me up.

HOODED CUSTOMER

You think I give a toss? Look what it's done! This potion's defective.

Gale winces. His eyes scan the room for magical artefacts.

OLLY

Look, I can't help you. Aren't you a wizard? Can't you just-?

HOODED CUSTOMER

You know bloody well I'm not! That was the whole point of this! Now, tell me what you're gonna do to fix it before I string you up.

GALE

(Clearing his throat)
Gentlemen, forgive me. I'd never normally dream of interrupting, but if you'll allow me-

HOODED CUSTOMER

Stay out of this, stranger.

GALE

Well. A stranger, yes, but I am also a wizard, and one of some renown. I'd be only too glad to help. If nothing else, to hasten things along a little. I'm afraid my need is, uh... rather urgent.

OLLY

What d'you need?

GALE

A trinket, touched by the Weave. Anything. Though nothing too precious - nothing that'd be missed, preferably. And I'd be more than happy to assist with... this while you dig something out.

HOODED CUSTOMER

You'll be digging your own grave, Zhent, if I don't see my coin and a potion - or a scroll, or whatever the fuck else undoes this - in my hand, now.

OLLY

I can't! You need to go, alright?

GALE

Perhaps I was too hasty.

Gale forces a strained smile, lifts his hand from the pain in his chest, and extends it to the Hooded Customer.

GALE (CONT'D)

I'm Gale of Waterdeep. I'm a little out of sorts at the moment, but I'd be much obliged if you'd permit me to-

HOODED CUSTOMER

(Tenses and draws his hood down further)
No! I mean, uh- No. Thanks. You, Zhent: my coin. And I'll go.

OLLY

No! Last time or Rugan'll gut you.

HOODED CUSTOMER

That's it. You've made your choice.

The Hooded Customer lunges at Olly. Gale casts a Telekinesis spell, throwing the man back across the room. His hood falls, revealing him as JARO (early 20s). His face is half-transformed into another person's by disguising magic: Gale's.

GALE

By Mystra's mana! Is that you, Jaro?
Why are you half... me?

JARO

You're supposed to be cowering in your tower, lap-dog! You had your chance.

GALE

I suppose you tired of hammering my door, then? Flooding my postbox, pestering my poor tressym, to demand my tutelage? Is this what's next: impersonating me? Or, trying to. Why? To what end?

JARO

You wasted it, what you had. Your power; your place. Stuck-up, spoiled Mystra's pet. Hiding, wallowing like somehow you got the short stick. But I won't waste it.

GALE

I see. Disappointing, though perhaps unsurprising. So, how were you hoping to use my reputation? Forge a whole new life? Or burn it to the ground?

JARO

Either suits me just fine, mage. And it'll be all the easier when you're gone.

GALE

Ah, Jaro. And after all my efforts at civility. Very well.

Jaro lights a fire cantrip in his hand. Gale readies his quarterstaff.

FADE OUT TO GAMEPLAY (COMBAT)